

July 10, 2026

David Hallauer
District Extension Agent, Crops & Soils

Summertime Weed/Brush Control Challenges

The Climate Prediction Center's recent eight-to-14-day outlook says summer is here. A 40-50 percent probability of above normal temperatures even with near normal precipitation means it could get a little uncomfortable for humans - and potentially the herbicides we're using as spot treatments in range/pasture situations. While labels vary in how they address application heat or drought stress parameters, keep in mind a few things as applications continue.

Start with the size of the droplet coming out of the spray nozzle. Small droplets tend to evaporate quickly (higher humidities can help offset this a bit...) and if they do so shortly after reaching the plant – or before – ample product may not get absorbed into the target plant. It can be difficult with some equipment to make adjustments, but, when possible, adjust nozzles or reduce spray pressure to result in larger droplet sizes.

Volatility of some of our weed/brush control products can also be an issue. Volatility increases when temperatures pass 60 degrees F and are greatest above 90 degrees F. Simply put, products can become more vaporous and move long distances - even in slight breezes. Be cautious of when and where you are making applications to avoid this, with special attention paid to temperature inversions. These occur when cool air is trapped near the surface by warmer air above and can result in unintended offsite product movement, particularly in combination with smaller droplet sizes. Avoid *any* application during inversions or damaging offsite movement can occur – at a greater distance than you might think.

Even after we get product to the plant, potential control barriers still exist. If drought stress is present, plants will try to conserve water, potentially inhibiting penetration by spray solutions into the plant. Make sure product and surfactant rates are appropriate to give you the best chance of success. Even after we get product *into* the plant, temperatures into the upper 80s and 90s can slow the plant mechanisms responsible for moving the herbicide through the plant. This can result in both reduced weed control and some reduced ability of the desired forage to metabolize herbicides appropriately, resulting in discoloration or stunting. For best results and when possible, apply when plants are actively growing and recovered from stresses.

It's hard *not* to go after weeds and brush when we have the opportunity. It's also hard to spend time and money on control only to see it perform poorly. Summertime doesn't mean we have to stop trying – but it does mean we may want to adjust things slightly to optimize control.

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Ross Mosteller
District Extension Agent, Livestock & Natural Resources

Bromegrass Grazing Management

If there was ever one plant that I have a love/hate relationship with, it is smooth bromegrass! There isn't much that can beat the production and quality of brome early in the growing season, but as all cool-season grass does, heat shuts it down and summer slump is real! David Hallauer and I recently did a "Tailgate Talk" discussing this topic (*check it out on MED Facebook and/or YouTube*) so while it is fresh on my mind it seems like a topic to discuss today.

Smooth bromegrass is a cool-season introduced grass with an advanced root system that tolerates temperature extremes and drought well. As a sod-forming perennial grass, it spreads rapidly through seeds and rhizomes which can aggressively begin to dominate pasture and range sites, especially with supplemental fertility. In its vegetative stage, this is a highly palatable, high-quality grass, but rapidly declines as it turns to reproduction in the summer months.

Bromegrass grows best when temperatures are between 60 and 75 degrees Fahrenheit. Growth begins in mid-to late April followed by a rapid growth phase in early to mid-May. During the summer, growth slows considerably and the plant will go dormant through July and August. Fall regrowth typically occurs in early September through mid-October. During the rapid growth phase, the amount of forage produced quickly outpaces animal intake which can lead to poor forage utilization.

Smooth bromegrass has a shorter effective grazing window compared to pastures dominated by native cool and warm-season grasses. As pastures become dominated by smooth bromegrass, native grass species are less able to compete and can get squeezed out of the plant community. As the native plant population declines, the ability to evenly and effectively utilize the available forage through grazing becomes more challenging.

While this can seem like a task, there are strategies that the ranch manager can implement to achieve more effective forage utilization. The following are guidelines for spring, summer, and fall grazing periods to assist ranch managers in developing a grazing strategy for pastures where smooth bromegrass dominate.

If bromegrass is grazed the entire season, moderate stocking rates must be used to ensure that enough forage is available during the summer months when forage production decreases. Initial turnout in spring should occur when forage height reaches 12-14 inches. Smooth bromegrass should not be grazed to a stubble height below 4 to 6 inches.

If another native warm-season grass pasture is available, an alternative strategy is to increase stocking rates on smooth bromegrass during spring, move to the native warm-season pasture in summer, then return to the smooth bromegrass in the fall with moderate stocking rates. Additionally, rotational grazing systems can help better utilize smooth bromegrass during the rapid growth phase. Smooth bromegrass quality is lower during the summer months, which makes mineral supplementation necessary during this period. At least 8 to 10 inches of regrowth should be available in fall grazing pastures. Grazing animals should be removed from fall grazing pastures when stubble height reaches 4 to 6 inches.

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Laura Phillips
District Extension Agent, Horticulture

Japanese Beetles

This time of year, many of us are combating Japanese Beetles in our gardens and lawns. Similar in appearance to other June bugs, the adult Japanese beetle is 1/4 to 3/8-inch long with a shiny, metallic-green head. The body has bronze wing covers and five clumps of hair that border the sides of the abdomen. The larvae are cream-colored grubs with a light brown head about 1 1/4-inch long at maturity.

Adult female Japanese beetles lay eggs in July beneath wet lawns. Upon hatching, larvae feed on the sod roots and overwinter until the following summer. In June, the larvae pupate and adult beetles emerge to feed above-ground. Japanese beetles are incredibly destructive, and feed on every part of the plant. The beetles skeletonize leaves and consume flowers and fruit entirely.

Hundreds of varieties of plants can play host to this non-selective pest. Some plants, however, are more attractive to Japanese Beetles than others. If you are looking to put in new flowers, trees, or shrubs, reach out to our office for a list of plants that do not attract Japanese Beetles.

In many cases, you inevitably want to grow something that attracts these pests. Controlling them is a challenge this time of year as new adult beetles emerge from underground daily over several weeks. In small quantities, beetles can be manually removed from plants and dropped into a bucket of soapy water. Check plants daily to look for symptoms. Mornings are the best time to observe as beetles are slower and easier to catch.

You may be tempted to treat your lawn to control the beetles while in the grub stage, but this is not an effective method of control. Japanese beetles can fly several miles, and you will most likely still be visited by these beetles even if they are not coming from your lawn. You only need to treat your lawn if they are causing damage to your turf grass.

While you can buy traps that lure Japanese beetles into a container where the pests can be gathered and disposed of, these are not recommended for controlling the beetles. The traps use pheromones used to attract beetles and can draw in even more beetles than would naturally appear. Not all of these beetles may end up in the traps and the result, and you may catch native beetles as well.

Insecticides such as cyfluthrin (Tempo), bifenthrin (Hi-Yield Bug Blaster II) and cyhalothrin (Bonide Beetle Killer, Spectracide Bug Stop Indoor + Outdoor Insect Killer, Spectracide Triazicide, Bonide Caterpillar Killer) can be used for Japanese beetle control with about two to three weeks protection. Carbaryl (Sevin dust) can also be effective but only for about one to two weeks. The downside of using such products is they will also eliminate parasitoids and other natural predators. Neem products (Natural Guard Neem-Py, Fertilome Triple Action Plus) and Pyola (pyrethrins in canola oil) can offer control for three to four days.

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Teresa Hatfield
District Extension Agent, Family and Community Wellness

Stay Fit and Keep Your Cool

Summer in Kansas brings long days, plenty of sunshine, and soaring temperatures. If you're like me, taking a walk outdoors is much more enjoyable than exercising on a treadmill inside. However, Kansas heat can quickly make an outdoor walk or jog uncomfortable—and sometimes even dangerous. That's why it's important to take precautions to prevent heat-related illnesses such as heat exhaustion and heat stroke, especially for adults over age 65.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), older adults are at greater risk for heat-related illnesses. As we age, our bodies become less efficient at regulating temperature. Older adults may not adjust as well to sudden temperature changes and are more likely to have chronic health conditions that affect the body's ability to stay cool. Certain prescription medications can also interfere with temperature regulation and sweating. Even healthy, active adults should take extra precautions when exercising during extreme heat.

The key is finding ways to stay active while avoiding excessive heat exposure. Consider these tips to help you stay cool and safe while exercising this summer:

Tips for Exercising Safely in Hot Weather

- Exercise during the coolest parts of the day, such as early morning or late evening.
- Wear lightweight, loose-fitting, and light-colored clothing.
- Use exercise apps or workout videos to stay active indoors.
- Add movement to your day by walking or marching in place during television commercials or other breaks.
- Stay hydrated by drinking water before, during, and after exercise.
- Wear sunscreen to protect your skin from harmful UV rays.
- Whenever possible, choose shaded routes or areas for outdoor activities.

If you are not accustomed to exercising in the heat, consider moving your workout indoors rather than risking heat exhaustion or heat stroke. It is also important to recognize the signs of heat-related illness.

Signs of Heat Exhaustion

If someone is experiencing heat exhaustion, move them to a cooler location, loosen or remove excess clothing, sip cool water, and cool the body with wet cloths, cool water, or mist. Seek medical attention if symptoms do not improve.

Common symptoms include:

- Dizziness or fainting
- Extreme thirst
- Heavy sweating
- Cool, pale, clammy skin
- Nausea
- Weakness
- Muscle cramps

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Signs of Heat Stroke

Heat stroke is a life-threatening emergency. Call 911 immediately.

While waiting for emergency help, move the person to a cooler location, remove excess clothing, and cool the body with wet cloths, cool water, or mist.

Symptoms may include:

- Confusion or altered mental status
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Hot, dry skin or a sudden stop in sweating
- Loss of consciousness

Kansas summers can be hot, but that doesn't mean you have to stop exercising. By adjusting your routine, staying hydrated, and paying attention to signs of heat stress, you can continue to enjoy the benefits of physical activity while staying safe and cool all summer long.

July 10, 2026

Cindy Williams
District Extension Agent, Food, Nutrition, Health and Safety

Why Should Pressure Canner Dial Gauges Be Tested?

Food Preservation season is here! Now is the time to have your pressure canner dial gauges tested to be sure they are accurate. This must be done so that low-acid foods are properly processed to prevent bacterial growth from bacteria such as *Clostridium botulinum*. This pathogen causes botulism which can be deadly.

Pressure canners use either a dial gauge or a weighted gauge. Weighted gauge canners do not require testing. Dial gauges can be tested using the Presto Testing Unit from National Presto Industries. Many local Extension Offices have the Presto Testing Unit to test the following brands of pressure gauges:

- National
- Presto
- Maid of Honor
- Magic Seal

The USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning recommends that consumer gauges test two or more pounds high or low of the master gauge should be replaced for safety. High readings will lead to under processed, unsafe food. Until the gauge is replaced, adjust the recipe pressure accordingly for your elevation. For example, if the recipe calls for 11 pounds pressure and the gauge reads 1 pound high, use 12 pound pressure.

Are Old Canning Recipes Safe?

Many people have canning recipes that are passed down from generation to generation. However, with current research, many of those recipes may be unsafe. This may be because of improper acidity, improper processing method for the type of food, too short processing time, no processing, etc.

Always use updated, tested recipes to ensure the safety of the food. Recommended sources for recipes include:

- USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning
- So Easy to Preserve—University of Georgia
- Kansas State University Food Preservation
- Other Universities and Non-Extension Sources

If you have any questions concerning resources for food preservation, contact your local Meadowlark Extension District Office at Oskaloosa---785-863-2212; Holton---785-364-4125; or Seneca---785-336-2184.